



Literacy Links

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Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First

"Teaching children to read is a challenging responsibility."
Learning Point Associates



Upcoming Maine Reading First Events

March 11 ~
Maine Reading First
grant applications
due

March 21 ~
Maine Reading First
Course Instructor
applications due

March 31 ~
Maine Reading First
grants awarded

Spotlight on...Maine Reading First

Under the administration of the United States Department of Education, the Reading First initiative is an authorization under the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of Reading First is to insure that all children become successful readers by the end of grade 3.

The funds which were awarded for the Maine Reading First initiative are used for two purposes. Eighty percent of these funds are used for competitive sub-grants for eligible schools. There are currently seven Maine schools which applied and were awarded three-year Maine Reading First sub-grants. The process for a second round of sub-grant is underway, and approximately seven to twelve additional schools will receive Maine Reading First sub-grants this spring.

The remaining 20% of Maine Reading First funds are used for statewide professional development. Some of the Maine Reading First professional development events include:

- Maine Reading First Statewide Course
- Maine Reading First Summer Institutes for Educators
- Maine Reading First Summer Seminar for Administrators

Summary of Professional Literacy Text... Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read is a booklet that was developed by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) through funds made available by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The booklet provides an easy-to-read summary of the findings of the National Reading Panel. The focus of the booklet is on grades K-3 and it is organized around the 5 essential elements of reading which were identified by the National Reading Panel: **phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension**. The section for each of these elements includes a description of the research, ideas for applying the research to instructional practice, and answers to frequently-asked questions. This booklet can be ordered or downloaded from the following website of "The Partnership for Reading".

<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/k-3.html>

Description of Instructional Idea... Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart

A knowledge rating chart is a tool that teachers can use to activate and assess student's prior knowledge about specific vocabulary terms.

Begin by selecting a set of vocabulary terms that relate to a theme or



"Teachers who have a thorough understanding of the 5 essential components of effective reading instruction are equipped to teach children to read using instructional strategies and materials that have proven to be effective."
Learning Point Associates

piece of literature of which you would like to assess student's knowledge. Create a chart with the following column headings:

- do not know the word
- have seen or heard the word
- know something about the word, can relate the word to a situation
- know the word well, can explain the word, can use the word

Ask students to rate their level of knowledge for each of the vocabulary words selected by placing a checkmark in the appropriate column. Compile the information gathered on the Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart into two lists: known words and new words. By using the list of new words as a focus for instruction, the instruction will be tailored to the students' background knowledge. Instruction for these new vocabulary words should include multiple encounters with the words in various contexts, association of the new words with vocabulary words that are familiar to the students, and introduction and regular use of the vocabulary words within classroom conversations.

News from Maine Reading First...

Maine Reading First is gearing up for a full plate of professional development offerings during the Summer of 2005. Four summer institutes are being planned for June and July, including two beginning-level Maine Reading First Institutes, one advanced-level Maine Reading First Institute, and one Maine Reading First Seminar for Administrators. Maine Reading First professional development offerings are geared to K-3 classroom educators and K-12 special educators. Locations, dates, and registration information for all summer professional development opportunities will be available in the April issue of *Literacy Links*.

Additionally, Maine Reading First is preparing to offer the Maine Reading First Course in schools across Maine again during the 2005-06 school year. The course syllabus can be accessed at:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>. If your school is interested in hosting this free, onsite course, please contact Janet.Trembly@maine.gov.

The MDOE is currently receiving applications for a second cohort of Maine Reading First Instructors. If you or someone you know might be interested in training to teach the Maine Reading First course, please email Janet.Trembly@maine.gov for more information or to obtain an application package. You can also access the application package at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email janet.trembly@maine.gov

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>